Caprimulgus minor Americanus.

The Whip-poor-Will.

THIS nocturnal Bird is about a third part leſs than the *Caprimulgus*, or *Goat-Sucker* of *Europe*. The length of it, from the bill, is eight inches; and from the ſhoulder of the wing to the end of it, is ſeven inches. The length of the bill, from the baſis of the upper mandible to the end of it, is half an inch long; two thirds of which being covered with feathers, there is viſible ſo ſmall a part of it, that, in proportion to the bigneſs of the bird, it ſeems to have the ſmalleſt bill of any other. From the baſes of the bill ſhot forth ſome ſtiff briſtly hairs. The throat has a white liſt half round its neck. The breaſt is white, ſtainly ſtained with red and tranſverſe dark lines. The quill feathers of the wings are of a dark brown colour, except a broad white liſt croſſing five of them on the middle of each wing. The tail feathers, except the three uppermoſt, have alſo two white ſpots near their ends. The plumage of all the reſt of the body is brown, irregularly mixed, or powdered with an obſcure reddiſh colour. The legs are very ſhort, being but half an inch in length, and formed like thoſe of the Goat-ſucker; having alſo the inſide of the middle toe ſerrated.

This Bird I have mentioned in the Addenda to this Volume; but having ſince received two of them from *Virginia*, it has enabled me to exhibit the figure of it, and alſo to add to the deſcription of it ſome remarks ſent me by Mr. *Clayton* concerning it, as follows:

'The *Whippoorwill* is not ſo large as the Bird called here the *Eaſt-India Bat*, i. e. *Caprimulgus*, but in ſhape, and colour of the feathers, it very much reſembles it, having alſo at each ſide of its mouth three or four ſtiff black hairs like thoſe of a horſe's main, two or three inches long. Theſe Birds viſit us about the middle of *April*, from which time, till the end of *June*, they are heard every night, beginning about dusk, and continuing till break of day; but it is chiefly in the upper or weſtern parts that they are ſo very frequent. I never heard but one in the maritime parts, although my abode has been always there; but near the mountains, within a few minutes after ſun-ſet, they begin, and make ſo very loud and ſhrill a noiſe all night, which the echoes from the rocks and ſides of mountains increaſe to ſuch a degree, that the firſt time I lodged there I could hardly get any ſleep. The ſhooting them in the night is very difficult, they never appearing in the day-time. Their cry is pretty much like the ſound of the pronunciation of the words *Whip-poor-will*, with a kind of chucking noiſe between every other or every two or three cries, and they lay the accent very ſtrong upon the laſt word *Will*, and leaſt of all upon the middle one.

'The *Indians* ſay theſe Birds were never known 'till a great maſſacre was made of their countryfolks by the *Engliſh*, and that they are the Souls or departed Spirits of the maſſacred *Indians*. Abundance of people here look upon them as Birds of ill omen, and are very melancholy if one of them happens to light upon their houſe, or near their door, and ſet up his cry (as they will ſometimes upon the very threſhold) for they verily believe one of the family will die very ſoon after. Theſe Birds, as I have been credibly informed, breed exactly as the *Goat-Sucker* before mentioned, which is thus: they lay only two eggs of a dark greeniſh colour, ſpotted and ſcrawled about with black, in the plain beaten paths, without the leaſt ſign of any neſt, upon which they ſit very cloſe, and will ſuffer a very near approach before they fly off.

N. B. This concludes the whole number of Birds exhibited in both Volumes, containing in all 113, and in which are alſo contained all the land-birds I have ever ſeen, or could diſcover in that part of *North-America* included between the 30th and 45th degrees of Latitude. And tho' more kinds may not improbably remain unknown within thoſe limits, yet north of them I think there cannot reaſonably be thought to be many new ſpecies, becauſe there are not only but a few Birds at the northern limits, but alſo becauſe animals in general, and particularly Birds, diminiſh in number of ſpecies ſo much the nearer they approach the Pole.

Aureliana Canadenſis R. P. Lafiteau.

The Ginseng, *or* Ninsin *of the* Chineſe.

GINSENG is the root of a medicinal plant of the higheſt eſteem with the *Chineſe*. Their principal Phyſicians have wrote many volumes of its virtues. Moſt of the Writers of *China* take notice of the *Ginſeng*; yet it was very little known 'till Father *Jartoux*, a Jeſuit and Miſſionary in *China*, who being employed, by order of the Emperor, in making a Map of *Tartary*, in the year 1709, had an opportunity of ſeeing it growing in a Village about four leagues from the Kingdom of *Corea*. That Father took the opportunity to make a draught of the Plant, and give an accurate deſcription thereof, which being publiſhed in the *Memoirs* of the *Academy of Sciences* at *Paris*, gave light to the diſcovery of the ſame Plant in *Canada* and *Penſylvania*; from which laſt place it was ſent to Mr. *Collinſon*, in whoſe curious Garden at *Peckham* it has the preceding two or three years, and alſo this year 1746, produced its bloſſoms and berries as it appears in the figure here exhibited, and agrees ſo exactly to the Father's deſcription of the *Chineſe Ginſeng*, that no doubt can be made of its being the very Species he deſcribes. But as the Jeſuit's account is too long to be inſerted here, I ſhall recite only what is moſt remarkable, adding to my Figure the bloſſoms, which the Father owns he never ſaw. The Father's account is as follows:

'The place of its growth is between the 39th and 46th degree of Latitude, upon the declivities of mountains, in thick foreſts, and upon the banks of torrents. That part of the country in which this precious root grows, is on every ſide ſecured by a barrier of wooden ſtakes, and about which guards continually patrol, to hinder the *Chineſe* from going out and looking after this root. Yet how vigilant ſoever they are, greedineſs after gain incites the *Chineſe* to lurk about privately in theſe deſerts, ſometimes to the number of two or three thouſand, at the hazard of loſing their liberty, and all the fruit of their labour, if they are taken either as they go out of, or come into the province it grows in.

'The Emperor having a mind that the *Tartars* ſhould reap all the advantage that is to be made of this Plant, rather than the *Chineſe*, gave orders, in 1709, to 20000 *Tartars* to go and gather all that they could of the *Ginſeng*, upon condition that each Perſon ſhould give him two ounces, and that the reſt ſhould be paid for, weight for weight, in pure ſilver. It was computed that by this means the Emperor would get this year about 20000 *Chineſe* pounds of it, which would not coſt him above one fourth part of its real value.

'The *Ginſeng* (ſays Father *Jartoux*) we have obſerved is an ingredient in moſt of the medicines which the *Chineſe* Phyſicians preſcribe to the better ſort of Patients. They aſſirm that it is a ſovereign remedy for all weakneſſes occaſioned by exceſſive fatigues, either of body or mind; that it attenuates and carries off pituitous humours, cures weakneſs of the lungs and the pleuriſy, ſtops vomiting, ſtrengthens the ſtomach, and helps the appetite, diſperſes fumes or vapours, fortifies the breaſt, and is a remedy for ſhort and weak breathing, ſtrengthens the vital ſpirits, and is good againſt dizzineſs of the head and dimneſs of ſight, and that it prolongs life to extreme old age.

'No body can imagine (adds the Father) that the *Chineſe* and *Tartars* would ſet ſo high a value upon this root, if it did not conſtantly produce a good effect. Thoſe that are in health often make uſe of it to make themſelves more vigorous and ſtrong; and I am perſuaded (adds the Father) it would prove an excellent medicine in the hands of any *European* who underſtands *Pharmacy*, if he had but a ſufficient quantity of it to make ſuch trials as are neceſſary, to examine the nature of it chymically, and to apply it in a proper quantity, according to the nature of the diſeaſe for which it may be beneficial." It is certain that it ſubtiliſes and increaſes the motion of, and warms the blood, that it helps digeſtion, and invigorates in a very ſenſible manner.

'After I had cedigied the root (he goes on) I obſerved the ſtate of my pulſe, and then took half of the root raw as it was, and unprepared; in an hour after I found my pulſe much fuller and quicker; I had an appetite, and perceived myſelf much more vigorous, and could bear labour better and eaſier than before. Four days after, finding myſelf ſo fatigued and weary that I could ſcarce ſit on horſe-back, a Mandarin who was in company with us perceiving it, gave me one of theſe roots; I took half of it immediately, and in an hour after I was not the leaſt ſenſible of any wearineſs. I have often made uſe of it ſince, and always with the ſame ſucceſs. *Thus far Father* Jartoux.

This Plant had a ſtraight round ſtem, and ariſe to about the height of ten inches; from the top of which ſhot forth three ſmaller ſtalks of three or four inches long, each of which had at their ends five ſerrated leaves on ſhort foot-ſtalks. From the ſummit of the ſtem ariſe perpendicularly another ſhorter ſtalk, on the top of which was placed a globular bunch of red berries, the pedicles of which ſpreading circularly, formed the radii of a ſphere. Theſe berries were double, containing each two flattiſh rough ſeeds covered with a thin ſkin. The flowers were very ſmall, compoſed of five round white petals, with five ſtamina and a piſtil, riſing from a calix with five ſections.

The root is white, three or four times the ſize of the ſtem, and grows tapering to the end, and is uſually about three inches in length, more or leſs; and it often parts in two or three branches.

LE GINSENG *eſt la racine d'une Plante medicinale de la plus haute eſtime parmi les* Chinois. *Leurs principaux medecins ont écrit pluſieurs volumes concernant ſes vertus. La pluſpart des Auteurs qui ont traité de la* Chine *n'auſoient pas de faire mention du* Ginſeng; *avant tout cela, il étoit peu connu juſqu'à ce que le P.* Jartoux, *Jeſuite & Miſſionaire dans la* Chine, *ayant été employé, par ordre de l'Empereur, à faire une carte de la* Tartarie *en* 1709, *eut occaſion de voir cette Plante croiſſant dans un village environ à quatre lieues du Royaume de* Corée. *Ce Pere prit cette occaſion de la deſſiner & d'en faire une deſcription exacte, qui ayant été publiée dans les* Mémoires de l'Acad. R. des Sciences à Paris, *donna quelque jour à la découverte de la même Plante en* Canada *& en* Penſylvanie; *d'où elle fut envoyée à Mr.* Collinſon, *dans le curieux Jardin duquel à* Peckham, *& elle a produit cette année* 1746, *& les deux precedentes, ſes fleurs & ſes baies, comme elle paroit dans la figure ici jointe, & convient ſi exactement à la deſcription du* Ginſeng *des* Chinois *donnée par le Miſſionaire, qu'on ne peut douter que ce ne ſoit la vraye eſpece qu'il a décrite. Mais comme ce qu'il en dit eſt trop long pour être inſeré ici, je n'en rapporterai que ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable, en ajoutant à ma figure la fleur entiere que le Pere avoue n'avoir jamais vuë. Voici les propres paroles du* Jeſuite:

'A l'égard du lieu où croit cette racine, on peut dire en general que c'eſt entre le 39. & le 47. degré de Latitude Boréale, c'eſt ſur le penchant de ces montagnes, & dans ces forêts épaiſſes ſur le bord des ruiſſeaux ou autour des rochers, au pié des arbres & au milieu de toutes ſortes d'herbes que ſe trouve la Plante de Ginſeng. *Les endroits où il croit ſont tous à fort ſéparez de la Province, par une barriere de pieux de bois, aux environs de laquelle des gardes rodent continuellement, pour empêcher les* Chinois *d'en ſortir & d'aller chercher cette racine. Cependant quelque vigilance qu'on y apporte, l'avidité du gain inſpire aux* Chinois *le ſecret de ſe gliſſer dans ces déſerts, quelquefois juſqu'au nombre de 2 ou 3000, au riſque de perdre leur liberté, & le fruit de leurs peines, s'ils ſont ſurpris en ſortant de la province, ou en y rentrant.*

'L'Empereur ſouhaitant que les Tartares *profitaſſent de ce gain preſqu'entierement aux* Chinois, *avoit donné ordre, en* 1709, *à dix mille* Tartares *d'aller ramaſſer eux-mêmes tout ce qu'ils pourroient de* Ginſeng, *à condition que chacun d'eux en donneroit à ſa Majeſté deux onces du meilleur, & que le reſte ſeroit payé au poids d'argent fin. Par ce moyen on comptoit que l'Empereur en auroit cette année-là environ vingt mille* Livres Chinoiſes, *qui ne lui couteroient guere que la quatrieme partie de ce qu'elles valoient.*

'*Les plus habiles medecins de la* Chine, *ajoute-t-il, le font entrer dans tous les remedes qu'ils donnent aux grands Seigneurs. Ils prétendent que c'eſt un remede ſouverain pour les épuiſements cauſez par des travaux exceſſifs de corps & d'eſprit; qu'elle diſſout les flegmes, qu'elle guérit la foibleſſe des poumons & la pleuriſie, qu'elle arrête les vomiſſements, qu'elle fortifie l'eſtomach, & ouvre l'appétit, qu'elle diſſipe les vapeurs, qu'elle remedie à la reſpiration foible & précipitée, en fortifiant la poitrine, qu'elle fortifie les eſprits vitaux & produit de la ſimpbie dans le ſang, enfin qu'elle eſt bonne pour les vertiges & les éblouiſſemens, & qu'elle prolonge la vie aux vieillards.*

'On ne peut guerre s'imaginer que les Chinois & les Tartares *faſſent un ſi grand cas de cette racine, ſi elle ne produiſoit conſtamment de bons effets. Ceux même qui ſe portent bien en uſent ſouvent pour ſe rendre robuſtes; & je ſuis perſuadé qu'entre les mains des* Européans *qui entendent la* Pharmacie, *ce ſeroit un excellent remede, s'il en avoient aſſez pour en faire les épreuves néceſſaires, pour en examiner la nature & par la voye de la* Chimie, *& pour l'appliquer dans la quantité convenable ſuivant la nature du mal auquel elle peut être ſalutaire.*

'*Après l'avoir deſſinée, continuë-t-il, je me tâtai le pouls, je pris enſuite la moitié de cette racine toute crûë ſans aucune préparation; & une heure après je me trouvai le pouls beaucoup plus plein & plus vif; j'eus de l'appétit, je me ſentis beaucoup plus de vigueur, & une facilité pour le travail que je n'avois pas auparavant. Quatre jours après, me trouvant ſi fatigué & ſi épuiſé de travail qu'à peine me pouvois-je tenir à cheval, un Mandarin de notre troupe qui s'en apperçut, me donna une de ces racines; j'en pris ſur le champ la moitié, & une heure après je me reſſentis plus de force. Bien ai uſé depuis aſſez ſouvent, toujours avec le même ſuccès. Juſqu'ici le P.* Jartoux.

Cette Plante a une tige droite & ronde, & s'éleve environ à la hauteur de dix pouces; de ſommet de laquelle ſortent trois petites tiges de trois ou quatre pouces de long, chacune deſquelles a au bout cinq feuilles ovales ſur des pédicules aſſez courts. Du ſommet de la tige s'éleve perpendiculairement une autre petite tige, ſur le ſommet de laquelle eſt placé un groupe globulaire de baies rouges, dont les pédicules s'étendent circulairement, formant les rayons d'une Sphere. Ces baies ſont doubles, contenant chacune deux ſemences platres & aſpres, couvertes d'une peau mince. Les fleurs ſont très-petites, compoſées de cinq petales ronds & blanches, avec cinq étamines & un piſtile, qui ſort d'un calice avec cinq ſegments.

La racine eſt blanche, trois ou quatre fois groſſe que la tige, mais elle diminuë inſenſiblement juſqu'au bout, ordinairement de la longueur de trois pouces, plus ou moins; quelquefois elle ſe partage en deux ou trois branches.